

BOARD OF FINANCE - Minutes

February 12, 2015, 7:30 PM

Town Hall Meeting Room

Present: Board of Finance members Chmn. Steve Ezzes, members Melissa Koller, Jerry Sargent, Allan Grauberd, Town Administrator Tom Landry, Director of Finance Rick Darling, Secretary Randi Derene, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Colleen Palmer, Spec. Ed Director Lois Pernice, Police Chief John Troxell, Police Commission V Chair Beth Gralnick, Weston Public School Administrators.

Finance Director Schools Dr. JoAnn Keating, Athletic Director Mark Berkowitz, David Finkel, Dick Bochinski and Michael Carter were not present

Chairman Ezzes called the Board into Executive session at 7:30pm

Chairman Ezzes called the Board into Open Session at 8:27pm

Discussion/decision regarding presentation of FY 2013-14 audit – Scott A. Bassett, McGladrey.

Mr. Basset reviews the FY2013-14 audit as attached to minutes.

Discussion/decision regarding Police Department request to withdraw up to \$37,000 from the Special detail Vehicle account for the purpose of purchasing a replacement vehicle for the Police Chief – Chief Troxell and Beth Gralnick

Mr. Landry gives some background in the capital budget request for a car to replace the current chiefs car. Chief Troxell noted that the money from the Capital Budget gets approved in late April, and police cars would be all gone by then, plus he wouldn't see the car until 5 or 6 months later. The Chief is requesting to get the car now and use the money from the Special Detail Vehicle Account. There is a balance of 62,000, so it can well cover the cost of this vehicle.

Chief Troxell stated that this new vehicle to replace his current 2008 vehicle. His old vehicle can be used around town, to tow message boards around etc...

Ms. Koller asks if money can be taken from the Vehicle Sinking Fund, which Mr. Landry confirms that it can be used, but money from that account has been used for other vehicles this year. Ms. Gralnick explains the funds from the Special Detail Vehicle account is there because of fees paid from outside jobs such as Louis Tree etc... and that the money gets replenished. The money in this account is often used to offset vehicle maintenance charges. Chief Troxell states that the car is coming from a dealer in Middletown CT who gets the vehicle from their headquarters in Plymouth County, Massachusetts.

Mr. Sargent recommends that the PD creates a separate fund for the revenue in this Special Detail Vehicle Account so that it is better tracked, especially since this will be an ongoing event.

Mr. Sargent makes a motion to approve, Ms. Koller seconds, motion carried.

Discussion/decision regarding District update – Dr. Palmer

Dr. Palmer gives a quick update that the Internal Services Fund has rebounded with medical claims trending very well. The BOE budget has been adjusted in the technology staffing to reduce the request

to 2.94 %. There was one item last night (at the BOS meeting) that created confusion and Dr. Palmer wanted to bring to everyone's attention. We spent about \$400,000 on providing education placements for students with social/emotional problems. Rather than outplacing these students, the BOE is looking at bringing them home and providing a program at the high school. The BOE is exploring bringing in a new program which they are requesting in this budget. No commitment has been made, but they are requesting to budget the funds. This program should be revenue neutral. The first year this program is used, you might not break even, but in the years following hopefully more students will participate. Some money has been saved from other areas in the budget and they are moving those funds into special education to allow them to bring this new program in. The program itself is \$260,000, including full time staff and services provided to the students. Dr. Palmer will get more information out and follow up with the Selectmen to clarify. These staff members would also be available to all other students in our school who may benefit from their services.

Ms. Koller asks about the housing for this program and what is the potential for bringing students in from other districts and make this a revenue center. Dr. Palmer responds that they would most likely not bring students in from other districts as the real attraction of this program is to be able to graduate from your own high school and be in their own home base. It could be explored down the road, but this was not the intent. Regarding housing, Dr. Palmer states that this program would need 1 ½ classrooms, and there is space at both the High School and the Middle School. Dr. Palmer states that the need is greater at the high school so the middle school will have a smaller space.

Mr. Sargent inquires about the staff members, needing two staff members to start the program. Dr. Palmer confirms that the two staff members can provide services for up to 18 students, but she will get clarification on what we would need to increase to 3 staff members. She also stated that conversations are just starting to be had with families. Mr. Sargent questions the logistics of the contract for this program and Dr. Palmer responds that she will work on getting that information. Dr. Palmer summarizes that this is a benefit to our students, family, and district and we are pursuing it, but it is not a huge additional expense added on, it is just using our funds differently.

Discussion/decision regarding mid-year Town budget outlook. Rick Darling, Finance Director

Mr. Darling states that overall we have a good halfway forecast with our fund balance projected to go up. Department receipts; there is not much of a variance to budget. State revenue; we just recently got an EEO1 audit, and there were some late special ed claims that didn't get into the initial filing, so they ended up getting an audit adjustment upward of about \$121,000 so that was good news. There was an additional \$125,000 for town road aid, which we used in the FY to offset the Singing Oaks paving capital line. Revenues are up \$900,000 over budget.

Expenditures: Under health insurance, we are forecasting a surplus in the \$75,000–\$80,000 range but most of it is going to back to the FD (part of an MOU). We are looking at a surplus under the workman's comp line. Legal; we anticipate coming in under budget. Police; we have projected deficits. OT line has to be revisited. Public Works; was looking good until the 3rd week in January, so now forecasted to be going over by about \$25,000. Paving is the main issue driving our bottom line on the Selectmen's budget as we ended up doing more roads than anticipated. We are showing about \$125,000 over budget. Ms. Koller asks about petroleum prices going down, and will the next year's budget anticipated

to be lower. Mr. Darling confirms, but electricity and natural gas is going up as per Mr. Landry. Mr. Darling is projecting a Fund Balance of 11.1 million or 16% of next years proposed budget.

Approval of meeting minutes of December 11, 2014 and February 3, 2015.

Ms. Koller moves to approve the minutes of Dec 11th, Mr. Sargent seconds. Motion carried

Ms. Koller moves to approve the minutes of Feb 3rd, Mr. Grauberd seconds. Motion carried.

New Business:

Mr. Bob Ferguson of Hickory Lanes asks about the decline in debt services. A trend that is concerning - debt service has been steadily declining. With this declining trend, where do these savings go? He is concerned they get swept into other operational budgets. He would like to get the opinions of the BOF.

Ms. Koller replies that it doesn't get swept under anything, it gets voted on separately.

Mr. Sargent is clarifying that what Mr. Ferguson is saying is that the budget is higher than it would be if these were recognized as savings. We are using the savings to offset some of our budget increases.

Mr. Sargent stated the savings are also used for some other projects such as roofing.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:25pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Randi Derene
Administrative Assistant

Approved 3/9/15